

GUIDELINES FOR VETERINARIANS

Property visits to horses with signs of EI

8 April 2008

This guideline is designed to give veterinarians a concise reference when investigating or coming into contact with horses with clinical signs of equine influenza (EI).

Equine influenza

Equine influenza is defined as a high morbidity respiratory disease of horses (and other equidae) involving coughing, nasal discharge, depression, inappetance and fever of more than 38.5°C. The morbidity is such that, in groups of susceptible horses, a significant proportion are likely to be very rapidly affected.

Horses that are recently recovered are unlikely to be infected (but can act as fomites).

Horses that have been vaccinated can be infected (and infective) but may not display overt clinical signs.

Laboratory testing for EI is 'positive' when Influenza A nucleic acid is detected by any PCR in any specimen and/or when blood samples from unvaccinated horses are sero-positive.

Horses

Horses include horses, mules, donkeys and other animals in the Equidae family.

Animal products of horses

Includes products such as respiratory secretions, mucus, blood, urine, faeces and hair.

Step-by-step disinfection guidelines

These are the procedures recommended for personal disinfection if you or your staff contact any horse that may be infected with EI.

Before coming into contact with the horses:

1. Completely cover yourself with overalls that can be disposed of or laundered on site.
2. Completely cover your hair with a hood or disposable hat.

3. Put on a face mask.
4. Put on gloves.
5. Put on rubber boots or disposable footwear that completely encloses your feet.

After coming into contact with the horses:

1. After collecting any specimens, package them into a plastic bag to take back to the car.
2. At the car, blow your nose into a tissue. Place the tissue in a plastic bag and leave onsite for disposal.
3. Decontaminate your hands with soap, detergent or disinfectant.
4. Clean and disinfect the outside of the sample bag using soap, detergent or disinfectant and pack into a disposable esky with ice bricks.
5. Disinfect any equipment you have used, e.g. thermometer, vacutainer holder, by thoroughly cleaning with soap, detergent or disinfectant.
6. Scrub rubber boots using soap, detergent or disinfectant before placing in vehicle.
7. Remove overalls, gloves, mask and hair covering and leave on site for washing or disposal.
8. Wash hands, arms and any exposed skin and hair thoroughly with surgical scrub or soap. Continue washing for at least two minutes. Make sure any exposed skin that may have been contaminated with saliva, nasal secretions or mucus is cleaned thoroughly.
9. After returning home, have a thorough shower for at least three minutes, including hair wash, and change into clean clothes.

EQUINE INFLUENZA HOTLINE

1800 675 888

WEBSITE FOR UPDATES

www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/equine-influenza



NSW DEPARTMENT OF
PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

Filling out forms

ANEMIS and other forms can be obtained by:

- downloading from www.nsw.dpi.gov.au/equine-influenza, or
- ringing the EI hotline on 1800 675 888.

Whenever examining any horse for EI, you must always fill out the ANEMIS 1 form for horses fully and accurately, even if the horse does not appear to be infected.

If EI infection is a possibility, you should also fill out the ANEMIS 2/3 form.

If you take samples from one horse you must fill out the RVL Specimen Advice form.

If you take samples from more than one horse you must also fill out the Specimen Key List by entering each animal ID and cross referencing to the actual samples.

When completing the ANEMIS forms, it is important that you provide the exact location of the horse/s you are examining, and the total number of horses on the property. A property name and locality alone is not sufficient. You need to provide more precise information:

- full property name and address including standard rural addressing number,
- property identification code (PIC) if available,
- a sketch map of the location of the property on the second page,
- lot and DP numbers if available from local council rate notice,
- map reference or GPS readings if available. If you are using a GPS, provide the full coordinates in decimal degrees, based on the WGS84 or GDA94 datum (usually the default setting). You may be able to borrow a GPS from the local Rural Lands Protection Board.

The virus is inactivated by basic cleaning and disinfection procedures.

Virus survival times can be as follows:

- hard, non-porous surfaces, plastic, stainless steel: 24-48 hours
- cloth and paper: 8-12 hours

The ANEMIS forms need to be faxed to NSW DPI on 02 6361 9976 as soon as you return to your practice.

All forms should then be sent with your samples to EMAI (Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute).

Sampling equipment

Minimise the use of your own equipment for examining and sampling horses. Use the owner's restraining equipment such as halters and twitches.

You will need to have with you:

- thermometer
- nasal swabs (plastic handles only) and viral transport medium (PBGs) vials (available from any Rural Lands Protection Board office)
- red top blood tubes
- needles/vacutainer holder or syringes
- plastic bag or cleanable container to hold all samples after collection.

Submitters of large numbers of specimens may request direct supply from EMAI using the EI Media Request form (available on the NSW DPI website under 'Equine influenza'). PBGS should be stored frozen and thawed prior to use.

Examination procedure

- Obtain detailed histories including any risk contacts and the clinical history of each suspect horse.
- Record the identity of each horse as you examine it; check for signs of respiratory disease and if possible take rectal temperature.

Collect nasal swabs and a blood sample from all horses with clinical signs and any in-contacts (to a maximum of 6 horses).

Sampling procedure

- Collect 2 x nasal swabs.
- Use one swab for each nostril. A normal 6 inch plastic handled cotton swab is satisfactory. These are supplied with each vial of PBGS. (Avoid wooden handled swabs.)
- Insert a dry swab deeply into the nostril and vigorously swab the nasal septum and ventral meatus.

- Place the swabs, one at a time, into the same 5 mL virus transport vial (PBGs), breaking off the swab stick. Do not touch the cotton end of the swab or the portion of shaft that is inserted into the vial. In an emergency if no virus transport medium is available then use about 2 mL of a sterile physiologic medium (e.g. saline), preferably in a 5 mL container.
- Collect 1 x 10 mL clotted blood (red top tube).

Note: In some cases you may be required to collect duplicate swabs from each horse – one for EMAI and one for AAHL (the national laboratory at Geelong). You will be advised by NSW DPI if this is the case.

Sample handling/packaging

EMAI has requested that vets who are submitting samples:

- label all sample containers very clearly, with the identity of the horse as recorded on the key list
- complete and submit all required forms
- package all forms in one zip-lock bag and swabs and blood samples in another zip-lock bag. Do not put paperwork and samples together in the same bag. Note: the sleeve on standard sample submission bags is ideal for separately packaging the forms.
- package samples and forms from different properties in separate bundles
- use only disposable eskies for samples (e.g. a vacutainer transport box). Eskies cannot be decontaminated and returned.

Sample submission

Samples should be kept chilled: for example, use ice bricks and a disposable esky.

All deliveries of suspect EI samples must first be notified to the Duty Veterinarian at EMAI on 0411 030 451.

Samples should be submitted by courier to:

Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute
Woodbridge Road
Menangle NSW 2568

Book the courier and arrange for next day delivery to EMAI/RVL between 08:30 am and 11:00 am Monday to Friday. Any other urgent deliveries must be pre-arranged with the laboratory.

More detailed information on any item addressed in these guidelines can be found on the NSW DPI website at www.nsw.dpi.gov.au/equine-influenza, or by ringing the EI hotline on **1800 675 888**.

© State of New South Wales through NSW Department of Primary Industries 2008. You may copy, distribute and otherwise freely deal with this publication for any purpose, provided that you attribute NSW Department of Primary Industries as the owner.

Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (April 2008). However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up to date and to check currency of the information with the appropriate officer of New South Wales Department of Primary Industries or the user's independent adviser.

File reference PUB2007/164

Courier	Metrostate	TNT	TOLL
Phone	02 9748 4098 after hours 0411 887 969	13 11 50	13 15 31
Latest booking time for same day collection	3 pm	3 pm	3 pm
Account number		9043 0013	20013X
Freight charge on con note	Tick to receiver and write 'EI'	Tick to receiver and write 'EI'	Tick to receiver and write 'EI'
Description of package on con note	Biological Substances – Cat B – UN3373	Biological Substances – Cat B – UN3373	Biological Substances – Cat B – UN3373
Delivery method on con note	'Overnight'	'Overnight first class'	'Overnight'